

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the amendments above and the following comments.

At the outset, Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication that the prior art rejections have been withdrawn.

Regarding the showing required under 37 CFR § 1.116(b) as to why the amendments above are necessary and were not presented earlier, Applicants point out that the amendments are, at least in substantial part, responsive to new grounds of rejection made in the final rejection. Since this is the first substantive response to the final rejection, clearly these amendments could not have been presented earlier. In view of the foregoing, and because these amendments are believed to place the application in condition for immediate allowance, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter and consider these amendments.

Claims 14-21 were rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In response, Applicants have adopted the Examiner's helpful suggestion and removed bone of contention step b). Applicants reiterate that there is nothing inconsistent with visualizing the sequence of a peptide fragment before actually synthesizing it. Consequently, the presence of previous step b) before previous step c) makes perfect sense. In any case, it is now a moot point.

With respect to the Examiner's comment concerning the ability to cleave the antigen into a *single* protein fragment, claim 14 has been amended to clarify that the

cleaving yields at least one protein fragment having a length of from 8 to 30 amino acids. The possibility that the cleaving leads to other protein fragments that do or do not share these characteristics is now not excluded, as the Examiner apparently believed it was with Applicants' use of the term "single."

Finally, claim 17 was rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In response, Applicants point out that claim 16, from which claim 17 depends, does refer to MHC class II molecules. In case the problem with claim 17 was actually the recitation to "the class I (or II) restricted presentation," Applicants have amended claim 17 to be more consistent with the wording of claim 16.

Applicants believe that the foregoing constitutes a bona fide response to all outstanding objections and rejections.

Applicants also believe that this application is in condition for immediate allowance. However, should any issue(s) of a minor nature remain, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned at telephone number (212) 808-0700 so that the issue(s) might be promptly resolved.

Early and favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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